

The Great Family

Genesis 12–15, 24

We continue to seek the elusive presence of God. God was present at creation, blessing all that was made. Noah walked with God and was led by God's presence to build the ark that preserved life. Now Abraham and Sarah discover that God is present *everywhere*, putting their lives on the line to test the promises of God.

How to Use this Parent Page

With your child, begin by looking together at the illustration below and listening as your child recalls—and in a sense relives—the experience of today's Godly Play presentation. Invite your child to respond to the drawing. You might say, for example:

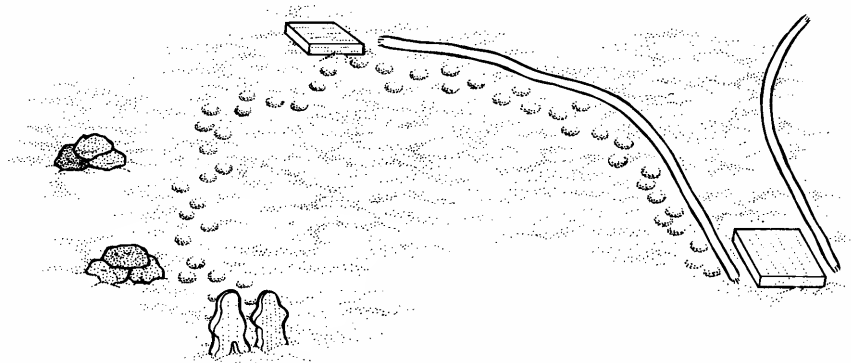
- I wonder what you can tell me about this picture?
- I wonder what this picture has to do with today's story?

Just listen. This is not a time to quiz children on what they may or may not recall about the lesson, but to be quietly present as they share their own experience. This will be different for each child—one may retell much of the presentation, another recall a single moment that had meaning, and yet another talk about his or

her own creative response. Again, your role is not to correct or supplement what your child tells you, but simply to listen in a supportive way. You are supporting the formation of young—sometimes very young—theologians.

Then, if you wish, you can read with (or to) your child the condensed version of today's presentation offered below. Whether you read the lesson or simply listen as your child shares what was received in today's lesson, ask the Wondering questions printed in the left column. Remember, there are many right answers! Be open to what the presentation can mean to you and your child. God will teach you new meanings every day. Conclude by sitting quietly for a moment and then saying "Amen."

The Presentation



One night God brought Abram outside. He looked up into the sky. God came so close to Abram, and Abram came so close to God, that Abram knew what God was saying. "You will become the father of a great family, and Sarai will be the mother. The members of the great family will be as many as there are stars in the sky and grains of sand in the desert."

Wondering

- **I wonder** what part of this story you like best?
- **I wonder** what part is the most important?
- **I wonder** where you are in the story? What part of the story is about you?

Abram laughed. He and Sarai were very old. God's promise sounded impossible, but God said to change their names. Abram was to be *Abraham* and Sarai was to be called *Sarah*.

One day, as Abraham was sitting by his tent, three strangers came out of the desert. Sarah fed them, as was the custom. They told Abraham that he and Sarah would have a son, and Abraham laughed. Sarah was standing by the tent, and she laughed too. They were too old.

Abraham and Sarah had a son. They laughed again, so they named the baby "Laughter." In their language the word for "laughter" is "Isaac."

When Isaac was grown, Abraham sent his most trusted helper back to the land of his people to find a wife for Isaac. Abraham's helper stopped by a well. Rebekah offered him water to drink. She helped him give water to his animals. Rebekah then invited him home. He told her family about Abraham and Sarah and the Great Family. Rebekah decided she would like to be part of that Great Family, so she went to Hebron.

Isaac saw them coming and came out to meet them. Then Isaac and Rebekah were married.

Isaac and Rebekah had children, and their children had children, and those children had children. This went on for thousands and thousands of years until your grandmothers and grandfathers had children. Then your mothers and fathers had children. Now *you* are part of that great family which has become as many as the stars in the sky and the grains of sand in the desert.

Godly Play Why Godly Play? (Part 4)

In every Parent Page, we offer information about Godly Play to help you understand both its methodology and purpose. In the previous three Parent Pages we listed several of the many reasons why we believe in and use Godly Play in our church. Here are a few more:

- Godly Play offers a child-accessible version of the ancient spiritual practice of *lectio divina*: holy reading, wondering and responding to the Bible's sacred stories. Instead of analyzing God's word, the children meditate in an artistic and kinesthetic way. Godly Play helps children know God and the Bible instead of simply knowing *about* God or *about* the Bible.

- Godly Play teaches that everything in God's creation is charged with the possibility of holiness, including each of us, and that we are in relationship with everything in Creation. There is no sacred versus the profane; all ground is holy ground.

- Godly Play teaches that there is *kairos* time (significant time) as well as *chronos* time (chronological or clock time). *Kairos* time is not concerned with knowing *what time it is*. Instead Godly Play gives us time to see God in the center of daily life and to reflect on what time is for.